

Decisions on Conditions and guidance for GCSE, AS and A level film studies, and for GCSE, AS and A level media studies



In February 2016 we published a consultation about the rules and guidance we proposed to put in place for new GCSEs, AS and A levels in film studies, and for new GCSEs, AS and A levels in media studies.

This consultation set out draft Subject Level Conditions, requirements and guidance which would apply to all new GCSEs, AS and A levels in these subjects.

We have reviewed the responses to the consultation and are now announcing our decisions. We are also publishing a more detailed analysis of the responses alongside this document.¹

GCSE, AS and A level film studies

Compliance with content requirements

We proposed that all reformed GCSEs, AS and A levels in film studies should comply with the relevant subject content requirements published by the Department for Education (DfE),² and with our assessment objectives.

The majority of respondents who commented on this proposal supported it, noting that it would help ensure comparability between different specifications. No respondents raised any significant concerns with this aspect of our proposals.

We have adopted this approach across all reformed GCSE, AS and A level qualifications, and we have decided to confirm our proposals in this area.

A number of respondents raised issues relating to the subject content requirements. These issues were out of scope for this consultation. The subject content was drafted

¹ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-as-and-a-level-reform-regulations-for-film-studies-and-media-studies

² www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-film-studies and www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-as-and-a-level-film-studies

and consulted on by the DfE³ before being published in its final form. We have passed on details of the issues raised by respondents to the DfE.

Non-exam assessment

We have previously confirmed that reformed GCSEs, AS and A levels in film studies will be assessed through a combination of 70 per cent exams, and 30 per cent non-exam assessment.

In our consultation, we proposed that we should set requirements outlining that:

- the non-exam assessment should comprise a single task (weighted at 30 per cent of total marks) which:
 - allocates 10 per cent of total marks to assessment objective AO2, and 20 per cent of total marks to assessment objective AO3; and
 - requires students to produce:
 - at GCSE – a genre-based extract from a film or screenplay to a brief set by the awarding organisation, and an evaluative analysis of their production in relation to other professionally produced films and screenplays.
 - at AS – an extract from a film or screenplay which highlights narrative construction within a film sequence to a brief set by the awarding organisation, and an evaluative analysis of their production in relation to other professionally produced films and screenplays.
 - at A level – a short film or screenplay for a short film in response to a brief set by the awarding organisation, and an evaluative analysis of their production in relation to other professionally produced films and screenplays.

We also proposed that our non-exam assessment requirements should require that:

- at GCSE, AS and A level the non-exam assessment task should be in response to a brief which should be released no earlier than the 1 June in the year before the qualification is to be awarded;
- the analysis and evaluation of a student's own work should form part of the non-exam assessment.

³ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/further-gcse-and-a-level-content-for-teaching-from-september-2017

The majority of our proposals relating to non-exam assessment did not attract any significant comment within the consultation responses.

However, a large proportion of respondents raised concerns in relation to our proposal to require a release date for the brief(s) at GCSE, AS and A level, which we set out in full in our analysis document. A number of these concerns, have caused us to reconsider our approach in this subject.

We proposed to introduce release dates because we were concerned about:

- the risk of malpractice occurring,
- the risk that non-exam assessment would not distinguish effectively between students of different abilities, and that – as a result – overall grades would be driven almost entirely by exam marks.

Having considered the consultation responses, we are of the view that a release date may not be the only way of achieving these aims, and that there may be a number of different equally legitimate approaches that exam boards could choose to take. We have therefore decided to remove the release date requirement.

However, significant concerns remain in relation to the areas outlined above, and we have therefore decided to introduce some guidance which sets out our expectation that exam boards meet the relevant requirements that are in place within our *General Conditions of Recognition*,⁴ and that they explain the approach they have taken in their assessment strategies.

A number of issues were raised in relation to policy decisions that we had previously taken about this qualification, including the weighting of non-examination assessment. The amount of non-exam assessment was the subject of our previous policy consultation,⁵ and was out of scope for this consultation. Respondents to this consultation did not raise any issues that would cause us to re-visit our previous decision.

Respondents also raised issues which related to the subject content requirements around the non-exam assessment task, for example, the inclusion of an evaluation exercise, and the fact that group work has been precluded. As set out above, these

⁴ www.gov.uk/government/publications/general-conditions-of-recognition

⁵ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/developing-new-gcses-as-and-a-levels-for-first-teaching-in-2017

issues were out of scope for this consultation. The subject content was drafted and consulted on by the DfE⁶ before being published in its final form.

Guidance on assessment objectives

We proposed to introduce guidance clarifying the interpretation of our assessment objectives.

The majority of respondents agreed with the approach, and respondents did not raise any comments which related to the guidance we produced. We have decided to adopt it in full.

GCSE, AS and A level media studies

Compliance with content requirements

We proposed that all reformed GCSEs, AS and A levels in media studies should comply with the subject content requirements published by the Department for Education (DfE),⁷ and with our assessment objectives.

The majority of respondents who commented on this proposal supported it, noting that it would help ensure comparability between different specifications. No significant concerns were raised.

We have adopted this approach across all reformed GCSE, AS and A level qualifications, and we have decided to confirm our proposals in this area.

A number of respondents raised issues relating to the subject content requirements. These issues were out of scope for this consultation. The subject content was drafted and consulted on by the DfE⁸ before being published in its final form.

Non-exam assessment

We have previously confirmed that reformed GCSEs, AS and A levels in media studies will be assessed through a combination of 70 per cent exams, and 30 per cent non-exam assessment.

In our consultation, we proposed that we should set requirements outlining that:

⁶ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/further-gcse-and-a-level-content-for-teaching-from-september-2017

⁷ www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-media-studies and www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-as-and-a-level-media-studies

⁸ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/further-gcse-and-a-level-content-for-teaching-from-september-2017

- the non-exam assessment should comprise a single task (weighted at 30 per cent of total marks) which:
 - allocates 30 per cent of total marks to assessment objective AO3; and
 - requires students to produce:
 - at GCSE – one individual media production in response to a brief set by the awarding organisation.
 - at AS – one individual media production in response to a brief set by the awarding organisation.
 - at A level – one individual media production (a cross media production) in response to a brief set by the awarding organisation.

We also proposed that our non-exam assessment requirements should require that at GCSE, AS and A level the non-exam assessment task should be in response to a brief which should be released no earlier than the 1 June in the year before the qualification is to be awarded;

The majority of our proposals relating to non-exam assessment did not receive any significant comment within the consultation responses.

However, a large proportion of respondents raised concerns about our proposal to require a release date for the brief(s) at GCSE, AS and A levels. Respondents expressed a variety of concerns in relation to this proposal, which we set out in full in our analysis document. A number of these concerns have caused us to reconsider our approach in this subject.

As with film studies, we proposed to introduce release dates in media studies because we were concerned about:

- the risk of malpractice occurring,
- the risk that non-exam assessment would not distinguish effectively between students of different abilities, and that – as a result – overall grades would be driven almost entirely by exam marks.

Having considered the consultation responses, we are of the view that a release date may not be the only way of achieving these aims, and that there may be a number of equally legitimate approaches that exam boards could choose to take. We have therefore decided to remove the release date requirement.

However, significant concerns remain in relation to the areas outlined above, and we have therefore decided to introduce some guidance which sets out our expectation

that exam boards meet the relevant requirements that are in place within our *General Conditions of Recognition*, and that they explain the approach they have taken in their assessment strategies.

As with film studies, a number of issues were raised in relation to policy decisions that we had previously taken in relation to this qualification, including the weighting of non-examination assessment. The amount of non-exam assessment was the subject of our previous policy consultation,⁹ and was out of scope for this consultation. Respondents to this consultation did not raise any issues that would cause us to re-visit our previous decision.

Respondents raised issues which about the subject content requirements around the non-exam assessment task, for example, the fact that research, planning and evaluation has not been included within the non-exam assessment task, and group work has been precluded. As set out above, these issues were out of scope for this consultation. The subject content was drafted and consulted on by the DfE¹⁰ before being published in its final form.

Guidance on assessment objectives

We proposed to introduce guidance clarifying the interpretation of our assessment objectives.

The majority of respondents agreed with the proposed approach. However, two exam boards suggested possible amendments.

We have decided to make minor changes to our guidance. We have:

- revised our proposed definition of ‘analyse’ for consistency with other subjects, and
- removed our proposed definition of evaluate because we felt it could cause confusion about the questions students should be expected to answer about academic theories.

We are of the view that the remainder of the guidance on assessment objectives is appropriate, and we have decided to adopt it unchanged.

⁹ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/developing-new-gcses-as-and-a-levels-for-first-teaching-in-2017

¹⁰ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/further-gcse-and-a-level-content-for-teaching-from-september-2017

Next steps

We have published the following documents which formally introduce our rules and guidance for GCSE, AS and A level film studies, and GCSE, AS and A level media studies:

- *GCSE Subject Level Conditions for Film Studies*¹¹
- *GCSE Subject Level Guidance for Film Studies*¹²
- *GCE Subject Level Conditions for Film Studies*¹³
- *GCE Subject Level Guidance for Film Studies*¹⁴
- *GCSE Subject Level Conditions for Media Studies*¹⁵
- *GCSE Subject Level Guidance for Media Studies*¹⁶
- *GCE Subject Level Conditions for Media Studies*¹⁷
- *GCE Subject Level Guidance for Media Studies*¹⁸

¹¹ www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-9-to-1-subject-level-conditions-for-film-studies

¹² www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-9-to-1-subject-level-guidance-for-film-studies

¹³ www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-subject-level-conditions-and-requirements-for-film-studies

¹⁴ www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-subject-level-guidance-for-film-studies

¹⁵ www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-9-to-1-subject-level-conditions-for-media-studies

¹⁶ www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-9-to-1-subject-level-guidance-for-media-studies

¹⁷ www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-subject-level-conditions-and-requirements-for-media-studies

¹⁸ www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-subject-level-guidance-for-media-studies